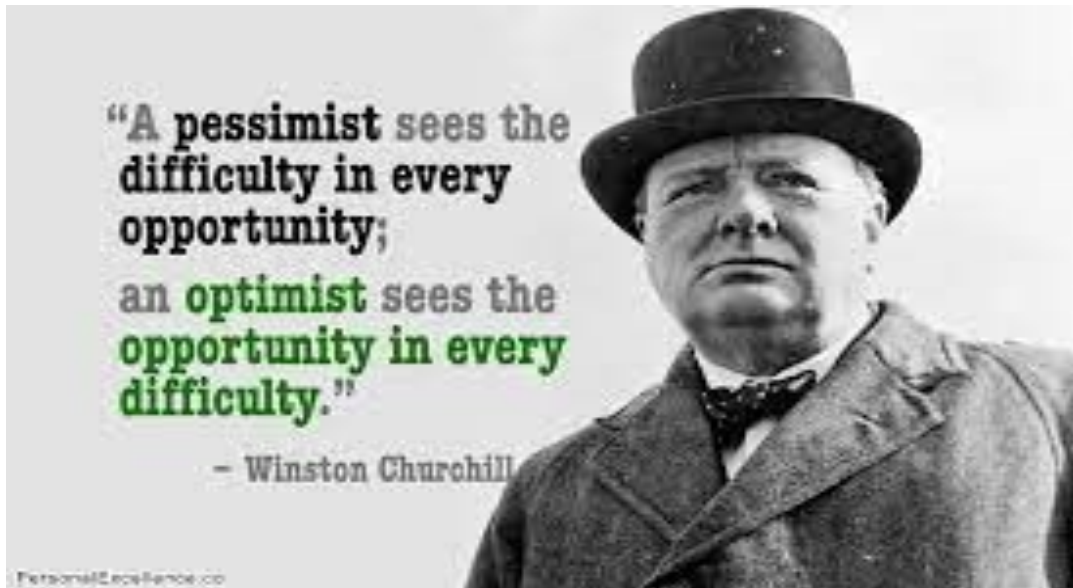


108
Greatest Of All Times



Globally selected
Personalities



30 Nov 1874 <::><::><::> 24 Jan 1965

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30 Nov 1874



24 Jan 1965

Sir Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill
The Nobel Prize in Literature 1953

Residence at the time of the award: United Kingdom

Prize motivation:

"for his mastery of historical and biographical
description as well as for brilliant oratory
in defending exalted human values"

Language: English

Prize share: 1/1

<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1953/churchill/biographical/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/history/past-prime-ministers/winston-churchill>



Winston Churchill

<https://www.history.com/topics/european-history/winston-churchill>

Winston Churchill was one of the best-known, and some say one of the greatest, statesmen of the 20th century. Though he was born into a life of privilege, he dedicated himself to public service. His legacy is a complicated one: He was an idealist and a pragmatist; an orator and a soldier; an advocate of progressive social reforms and an unapologetic elitist; a defender of democracy – especially during World War II – as well as of Britain's fading empire. But for many people in Great Britain and elsewhere, Winston Churchill is simply a hero.

Early Life

Winston Churchill came from a long line of English aristocrat-politicians. His father, Lord Randolph Churchill, was descended from the First Duke of Marlborough and was himself a well-known figure in Tory politics in the 1870s and 1880s.

His mother, born Jennie Jerome, was an American heiress whose father was a stock speculator and part-owner of The New York Times. (Rich American girls like Jerome who married European noblemen were known as "dollar princesses.")

Did you know? Sir Winston Churchill won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1953 for his six-volume history of World War II.

Churchill was born at the family's estate near Oxford on November 30, 1874. He was educated at the Harrow prep school, where he performed so poorly that he did not even bother to apply to Oxford or Cambridge. Instead, in 1893 young Winston Churchill headed off to military school at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

Battles and Books

After he left Sandhurst, Churchill traveled all around the British Empire as a soldier and as a journalist. In 1896, he went to India; his first book,

published in 1898, was an account of his experiences in India's Northwest Frontier Province.

In 1899, the London Morning Post sent him to cover the Boer War in South Africa, but he was captured by enemy soldiers almost as soon as he arrived. (News of Churchill's daring escape through a bathroom window made him a minor celebrity back home in Britain.)

By the time he returned to England in 1900, the 26-year-old Churchill had published five books.

Churchill: "Crossing the Chamber"

That same year, Winston Churchill joined the House of Commons as a Conservative. Four years later, he "crossed the chamber" and became a Liberal.

His work on behalf of progressive social reforms such as an eight-hour workday, a government-mandated minimum wage, a state-run labor exchange for unemployed workers and a system of public health insurance infuriated his Conservative colleagues, who complained that this new Churchill was a traitor to his class.

Churchill and Gallipoli

In 1911, Churchill turned his attention away from domestic politics when he became the First Lord of the Admiralty (akin to the Secretary of the Navy in the U.S.). Noting that Germany was growing more and more bellicose, Churchill began to prepare Great Britain for war: He established the Royal Naval Air Service, modernized the British fleet and helped invent one of the earliest tanks.

Despite Churchill's prescience and preparation, World War I was a stalemate from the start. In an attempt to shake things up, Churchill proposed a military campaign that soon dissolved into disaster: the 1915 invasion of the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey.

Churchill hoped that this offensive would drive Turkey out of the war and encourage the Balkan states to join the Allies, but Turkish resistance was much stiffer than he had anticipated. After nine months and 250,000 casualties, the Allies withdrew in disgrace.

After the debacle at Gallipoli, Churchill left the Admiralty.

Churchill Between the Wars

During the 1920s and 1930s, Churchill bounced from government job to government job, and in 1924 he rejoined the Conservatives. Especially after the Nazis came to power in 1933, Churchill spent a great deal of time warning his countrymen about the perils of German nationalism, but Britons were weary of war and reluctant to get involved in international affairs again.

Likewise, the British government ignored Churchill's warnings and did all it could to stay out of Hitler's way. In 1938, Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain even signed an agreement giving Germany a chunk of Czechoslovakia – "throwing a small state to the wolves," Churchill scolded – in exchange for a promise of peace.

A year later, however, Hitler broke his promise and invaded Poland. Britain and France declared war. Chamberlain was pushed out of office, and Winston Churchill took his place as prime minister in May 1940.

Churchill: The "British Bulldog"

"I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat," Churchill told the House of Commons in his first speech as prime minister.

"We have before us many, many long months of struggle and of suffering. You ask, what is our policy? I can say: It is to wage war, by sea, land and air, with all our might and with all the strength that God can give us; to wage war against a monstrous tyranny, never surpassed in the dark, lamentable catalogue of human crime. That is our policy. You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word: It is victory, victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory, however long and hard the road may be; for without victory, there is no survival."

Just as Churchill predicted, the road to victory in World War II was long and difficult: France fell to the Nazis in June 1940. In July, German fighter planes began three months of devastating air raids on Britain herself.

Though the future looked grim, Churchill did all he could to keep British spirits high. He gave stirring speeches in Parliament and on the radio. He persuaded U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt to provide war supplies –

ammunition, guns, tanks, planes – to the Allies, a program known as Lend-Lease, before the Americans even entered the war.

Though Churchill was one of the chief architects of the Allied victory, war-weary British voters ousted the Conservatives and their prime minister from office just two months after Germany's surrender in 1945.

The Iron Curtain

The now-former prime minister spent the next several years warning Britons and Americans about the dangers of Soviet expansionism.

In a speech in Fulton, Missouri, in 1946, for example, Churchill declared that an anti-democratic "Iron Curtain," "a growing challenge and peril to Christian civilization," had descended across Europe. Churchill's speech was the first time anyone had used that now-common phrase to describe the Communist threat.

In 1951, 77-year-old Winston Churchill became prime minister for the second time. He spent most of this term working (unsuccessfully) to build a sustainable détente between the East and the West. He retired from the post in 1955.

In 1953, Queen Elizabeth made Winston Churchill a knight of the Order of the Garter. He died in 1965, one year after retiring from Parliament.



[Kindly visit the following Web Links to know MORE!](#)

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<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Winston-Churchill>

A selection of Winston Churchill's most famous QUOTES

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"No One Would Do Such Things"

"So now the Admiralty wireless whispers through the ether to the tall masts of ships, and captains pace their decks absorbed in thought. It is nothing. It is less than nothing. It is too foolish, too fantastic to be thought of in the twentieth century. Or is it fire and murder leaping out of the darkness at our throats, torpedoes ripping the bellies of half-awakened ships, a sunrise on a vanished naval supremacy, and an island well-guarded hitherto, at last defenceless? No, it is nothing. No one would do such things. Civilization has climbed above such perils. The interdependence of nations in trade and traffic, the sense of public law, the Hague Convention, Liberal principles, the Labour Party, high finance, Christian charity, common sense have rendered such nightmares impossible. Are you quite sure? It would be a pity to be wrong. Such a mistake could only be made once—once for all."

—1923, recalling the possibility of war between France and Germany after the Agadir Crisis of 1911, in *The World Crisis*, vol. 1, 1911-1914, pp. 48-49.

"The King's Ships Were at Sea"

"We may now picture this great Fleet, with its flotillas and cruisers, steaming slowly out of Portland Harbour, squadron by squadron, scores of gigantic castles of steel wending their way across the misty, shining sea, like giants bowed in anxious thought. We may picture them again as darkness fell, eighteen miles of warships running at high speed and in absolute blackness through the narrow Straits, bearing with them into the broad waters of the North the safeguard of considerable affairs...The King's ships were at sea."

—1923, recalling the passage of the Royal Navy to its war stations at the outbreak of World War I, in *The World Crisis*, vol. 1, 1911-1914, pp. 212. Churchill, as First Lord of the Admiralty, had taken it upon himself to order the fleet to its stations as war loomed between France and Germany.

"I'd Drink [Poison]" (Apocryphal)

Lady Astor: "If I were married to you, I'd put poison in your coffee."

Reply: "If I were married to you, I'd drink it."

—1920s. Churchill biographer Sir Martin Gilbert said this exchange was more likely to have occurred between Lady Astor and Churchill's good friend F.E. Smith, Lord Birkenhead, a notorious acerbic wit. But both Consuelo Vanderbilt (*The Glitter and the Gold*) and Christopher Sykes (*Nancy: The Life of Lady Astor*) say the riposte was by Churchill. The argument was rendered moot when Fred Shapiro, in *The Yale Book of Quotations*, tracked the origins of the phrase to a joke line from a 1900 edition of *The Chicago Tribune*.

"Total and Unmitigated Defeat"

"I will begin by saying what everybody would like to ignore or forget but which must nevertheless be stated, namely that we have sustained a total and unmitigated defeat, and France has suffered even more than we have....the German dictator, instead of snatching the victuals from the table, has been content to have them served to him course by course."

—House of Commons, 5 October 1938, after the Munich agreement began the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia. The rest of that unhappy country was swallowed by Hitler six months later.

"Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat"

"I would say to the House, as I said to those who have joined this Government, I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat. We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. We have before us many long months of toil and struggle.

"You ask what is our policy. I will say, it is to wage war with all our might, with all the strength that God can give us, to wage war against a monstrous tyranny never surpassed in the dark, lamentable catalogue of human crime.

"You ask what is our aim? I can answer in one word: Victory. Victory at all costs. Victory in spite of all terror. Victory however long and hard the road may be. For without victory there is no survival."

—First speech as Prime Minister, House of Commons, 13 May 1940. Churchill first used the phrase "blood and sweat" in 1900; "Blood, sweat

and tears” came together in his 1939 article, “Can Franco Restore Unity and Strength to Spain.”

“Be Ye Men of Valour”

“Today is Trinity Sunday. Centuries ago words were written to be a call and a spur to the faithful servants of Truth and Justice: ‘Arm yourselves, and be ye men of valour, and be in readiness for the conflict; for it is better for us to perish in battle than to look upon the outrage of our nation and our altar. As the will of God is in Heaven, even so let it be.’”

—First broadcast as Prime Minister, 19 May 1940. Churchill adopted the quotation from 1 Maccabees 3:58-60. The four Books of the Maccabees, also spelt “Machabbes,” are not in the Hebrew Bible but the first two books are part of canonical scripture in the Septuagint and the Vulgate and are in the Protestant Apocrypha. But Churchill somewhat edited the text. For the original wording [click here](#).

“Never Surrender”

“We shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end. We shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air. We shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be. We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing-grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills. We shall never surrender!”

—House of Commons, 4 June 1940, following the evacuation of British and French armies from Dunkirk as the German tide swept through France.

“Their Finest Hour”

What General Weygand called the Battle of France is over. I expect that the battle of Britain is about to begin. Upon this battle depends the survival of Christian civilisation. Upon it depends our own British life, and the long continuity of our institutions and our Empire. The whole fury and might of the enemy must very soon be turned on us. Hitler knows that he will have to break us in this island or lose the war. If we can stand up to him, all Europe may be free and the life of the world may move forward into broad, sunlit uplands. But if we fail, then the whole world, including the United States, including all that we have known and cared for, will sink into the abyss of a new Dark Age made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the lights of perverted science. Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves that if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say, ‘This was their Finest Hour.’

—House of Commons, 18 June 1940, following the collapse of France. Many thought Britain would follow.

“War of the Unknown Warriors”

This is no war of chieftains or of princes, of dynasties or national ambition; it is a war of peoples and of causes. There are vast numbers, not only in this island but in every land, who will render faithful service in this war but whose names will never be known, whose deeds will never be recorded. This is a war of the Unknown Warriors; but let all strive without failing in faith or in duty, and the dark curse of Hitler will be lifted from our age.”

—BBC Broadcast, London, 14 July 1940

“The Few”

“The gratitude of every home in our island, in our Empire, and indeed throughout the world, except in the abodes of the guilty, goes out to the British airmen who, undaunted by odds, unwearied in their constant challenge and mortal danger, are turning the tide of the world war by their prowess and by their devotion. Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few. ”

—Tribute to the Royal Air Force, House of Commons, 20 August 1940. The Battle of Britain peaked a month later. Because of German bombing raids, Churchill said, Britain was “a whole nation fighting and suffering together.” He had worked out the phrase about “The Few” in his mind as he visited the Fighter Command airfields in Southern England.

“A Dark and Deadly Valley”

“Far be it from me to paint a rosy picture of the future. Indeed, I do not think we should be justified in using any but the most sombre tones and colours while our people, our Empire and indeed the whole English-speaking world are passing through a dark and deadly valley. But I should be failing in my duty if, on the other wise, I were not to convey the true impression, that a great nation is getting into its war stride.”

—House of Commons, 22 January 1941

“Linchpin of the English-Speaking World”

“Canada is the linchpin of the English-speaking world. Canada, with those relations of friendly, affectionate intimacy with the United States on the one hand and with her

unswerving fidelity to the British Commonwealth and the Motherland on the other, is the link which joins together these great branches of the human family, a link which, spanning the oceans, brings the continents into their true relation and will prevent in future generations any growth of division between the proud and the happy nations of Europe and the great countries which have come into existence in the New World."

—Mansion House, London, 4 September 1941, at a luncheon in honour of Mackenzie King, Prime Minister of Canada.

"Captain of Our Souls"

"The mood of Britain is wisely and rightly averse from every form of shallow or premature exultation. This is no time for boasts or glowing prophecies, but there is this—a year ago our position looked forlorn, and well nigh desperate, to all eyes but our own. Today we may say aloud before an awe-struck world, 'We are still masters of our fate. We still are captain of our souls.'"

—House of Commons, 9 September 1941

"Never Give In"

"This is the lesson: never give in, never give in, never, never, never, never—in nothing, great or small, large or petty—never give in except to convictions of honour and good sense. Never yield to force; never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy."

—Harrow School, 29 October 1941. It is commonly believed that Churchill stood up, gave the three-word speech, "Never give in!", and sat down. This is incorrect, as is the suggestion, variously reported, that the speech occurred at Oxford or Cambridge. It was on his first visit to his old school, Harrow, where he would continue to return for the annual "Songs," making his last appearance in 1961.

"Child of the House of Commons"

"I am a child of the House of Commons. I was brought up in my father's house to believe in democracy. 'Trust the people'—that was his message....I owe my advancement entirely to the House of Commons, whose servant I am. In my country, as in yours, public men are proud to be the servants of the State and would be ashamed to be its masters. Therefore I have been in full harmony all my life with the tides which have flowed on both sides of the Atlantic against privilege and monopoly....By the way, I cannot help reflecting that if my father had been American and my mother British, instead of the other way around, I might have got here on my own!"

—First of three speeches to a Joint Session of the States Congress, after Pearl Harbor, delivered 26 December 1941. (The others occurred in 1943 and 1952.)

“Some Chicken—Some Neck!”

“When I warned [the French] that Britain would fight on alone, whatever they did, their Generals told their Prime Minister and his divided cabinet: ‘In three weeks, England will have her neck wrung like a chicken.

“Some chicken....Some neck!

—Canadian Parliament, Ottawa, 30 December 1941. Following this speech, Yousuf Karshtook his *famous photographs of Churchill*.

“Sugar Candy”

“We have not journeyed across the centuries, across the oceans, across the mountains, across the prairies, because we are made of sugar candy.”

—*Canadian Parliament, Ottawa, 30 December 1941.*

“The End of the Beginning”

“The Germans have received back again that measure of fire and steel which they have so often meted out to others. Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.”

—Lord Mayor’s Luncheon, Mansion House following the victory at El Alamein North Africa, London, 10 November 1942.

“We Shape Our Buildings”

“On the night of May 10, 1941, with one of the last bombs of the last serious raid, our House of Commons was destroyed by the violence of the enemy, and we have now to consider whether we should build it up again, and how, and when.

“We shape our buildings, and afterwards our buildings shape us. Having dwelt and served for more than forty years in the late Chamber, and having derived very great pleasure and advantage therefrom, I, naturally, should like to see it restored in all essentials to its old form, convenience and dignity.”

—House of Commons (meeting in the House of Lords), 28 October 1943. The old House was rebuilt in 1950 in its old form, remaining insufficient to seat all its members. Churchill was against “giving each member a desk to sit at and a lid to bang” because, he explained, the House would be mostly empty most of the time; whereas, at critical votes and moments, it would fill beyond capacity, with members spilling out into the aisles, in his view a suitable “sense of crowd and urgency.”

“Up with which I will not put” (Apocryphal)

“This is the kind of tedious [sometimes “pedantic”] nonsense up with which I will not put!”

—Alleged marginal note by Churchill, 27 February 1944, to a priggish civil servant’s memo objecting to the ending of sentences with prepositions. The New York Times version reported that the Prime Minister underscored “up” heavily.

The sources are cable reports by The New York Times and Chicago Tribune, 28 February 1944. The Yale Book of Quotations quotes The Wall Street Journal of 30 September 1942 which in turn quoted an undated article in The Strand Magazine: “When a memorandum passed round a certain Government department, one young pedant scribbled a postscript drawing attention to the fact that the sentence ended with a preposition, which caused the original writer to circulate another memorandum complaining that the anonymous postscript was ‘offensive impertinence, up with which I will not put.’” Verdict: An invented phrase put in Churchill’s mouth.

“I leave when the pub closes”

Toward the end of World War II, before the July 1945 election that he would lose, *The Times* (London) prepared an editorial suggesting that Churchill campaign as a non-partisan world leader and retire gracefully soon afterwards. The editor kindly informed Churchill that he was going to make these two points.

“Mr Editor,” Churchill replied to the first point, “I fight for my corner.”

And, to the second: “Mr Editor, I leave when the pub closes.”

—May 1945. H.A.Grunwald, *Churchill: The Life Triumphant* (American Heritage, 1965)

"Lousy" as a Parliamentary Expression

The Minister of Fuel and Power, Hugh Gaitskell, later Attlee's successor as leader of the Labour Party, advocated saving energy by taking fewer baths: "Personally, I have never had a great many baths myself, and I can assure those who are in the habit of having a great many that it does not make a great difference to their health if they have less."

This was too much for Churchill, a renowned bather: "When Ministers of the Crown speak like this on behalf of HM Government, the Prime Minister and his friends have no need to wonder why they are getting increasingly into bad odour. I have even asked myself, when meditating upon these points, whether you, Mr. Speaker, would admit the word 'lousy' as a Parliamentary expression in referring to the Administration, provided, of course, it was not intended in a contemptuous sense but purely as one of factual narration."

—House of Commons, 28 October 1947

"Withhold No Sacrifice"

"We have surmounted all the perils and endured all the agonies of the past. We shall provide against and thus prevail over the dangers and problems of the future, withhold no sacrifice, grudge no toil, seek no sordid gain, fear no foe. All will be well. We have, I believe, within us the life-strength and guiding light by which the tormented world around us may find the harbour of safety, after a storm-beaten voyage."

—Chateau Laurier, Ottawa, 9 November 1954

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Sir Winston Churchill

A BIOGRAPHY

The aim of this page is to give a brief introduction to the career of Sir Winston Churchill, and to reveal the main features of both the public and the private life of the most famous British Prime Minister of the twentieth century.

The Child

Winston Churchill was born into the privileged world of the British aristocracy on November 30, 1874. His father, Lord Randolph Churchill, was a younger son of the 7th Duke of Marlborough. His mother, Jennie Jerome, was the daughter of an American business tycoon, Leonard Jerome.

Winston's childhood was not a particularly happy one. Like many Victorian parents, Lord and Lady Randolph Churchill were distant. The family Nanny, Mrs Everest, became a surrogate mother to Winston and his younger brother, John S Churchill.

The Soldier

After passing out of Sandhurst and gaining his commission in the 4th Hussars' in February 1895, Churchill saw his first shots fired in anger during a semi-official expedition to Cuba later that year. He enjoyed the experience which coincided with his 21st birthday.

In 1897 Churchill saw more action on the North West Frontier of India, fighting against the Pathans. He rode his grey pony along the skirmish lines in full view of the enemy. "Foolish perhaps," he told his mother, "

but I play for high stakes and given an audience there is no act too daring and too noble.” Churchill wrote about his experiences in his first book *The Story of the Malakand Field Force* (1898). He soon became an accomplished war reporter, getting paid large sums for stories he sent to the press – something which did not make him popular with his senior officers.

Using his mother’s influence, Churchill got himself assigned to Kitchener’s army in Egypt. While fighting against the Dervishes he took part in the last great cavalry charge in English history – at the Battle of Omdurman in 1898.

The Politician

Churchill was first elected to parliament in 1900 shortly before the death of Queen Victoria. He took his seat in the House of Commons as the Conservative Member for Oldham in February 1901 and made his maiden speech four days later. But after only four years as a Conservative he crossed the floor and joined the Liberals, making the flamboyant gesture of sitting next to one of the leading radicals, David Lloyd George.

Churchill rose swiftly within the Liberal ranks and became a Cabinet Minister in 1908 – President of the Board of Trade. In this capacity and as Home Secretary (1910-11) he helped to lay the foundations of the post-1945 welfare state.

His parliamentary career was far from being plain sailing and he made a number of spectacular blunders, so much so that he was often accused of having genius without judgement. The chief setback of his career occurred in 1915 when, as First Lord of the Admiralty, he sent a naval force to the Dardanelles in an attempt to knock Turkey out of the war and to outflank Germany on a continental scale. The expedition was a disaster and it marked the lowest point in Churchill’s fortunes.

However, Churchill could not be kept out of power for long and Lloyd George, anxious to draw on his talents and to spike his critical guns, soon re-appointed him to high office. Their relationship was not always a



comfortable one, particularly when Churchill tried to involve Britain in a crusade against the Bolsheviks in Russia after the Great War.

Between 1922 and 1924 Churchill left the Liberal Party and, after some hesitation, rejoined the Conservatives. Anyone could “rat”, he

remarked complacently, but it took a certain ingenuity to “re-rat”. To his surprise, Churchill was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer by Stanley Baldwin, an office in which he served from 1924 to 1929. He was an ebullient if increasingly anachronistic figure, returning Britain to the Gold Standard and taking an aggressive part in opposing the General Strike of 1926.

After the Tories were defeated in 1929, Churchill fell out with Baldwin over the question of giving India further self-government. Churchill became more and more isolated in politics and he found the experience of perpetual opposition deeply frustrating. He also made further blunders, notably by supporting King Edward VIII during the abdication crisis of 1936. Largely as a consequence of such errors, people did not heed Churchill’s dire warnings about the rise of Hitler and the hopelessness of the appeasement policy. After the Munich crisis, however, Churchill’s prophecies were seen to be coming true and when war broke out in September 1939 Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain appointed him First Lord of the Admiralty. So, nearly twenty-five years after he had left the post in pain and sorrow, the Navy sent out a signal to the Fleet: “Winston is back”.

The War Leader

For the first nine months of the conflict, Churchill proved that he was, as Admiral Fisher had once said, “a war man”. Chamberlain was not. Consequently the failures of the Norwegian Campaign were blamed on

the pacific Prime Minister rather than the belligerent First Lord, and, when Chamberlain resigned after criticisms in the House of Commons, Churchill became leader of a coalition government. The date was May 10, 1940: it was Churchill's, as well as Britain's, finest hour.

When the German armies conquered France and Britain faced the Blitz, Churchill embodied his country's will to resist. His oratory proved an inspiration. When asked exactly what Churchill did to win the war, Clement Attlee, the Labour leader who served in the coalition government, replied: "Talk about it." Churchill talked incessantly, in private as well as in public – to the astonishment of his private secretary, Jock Colville, he once spent an entire luncheon addressing himself exclusively to the marmalade cat.

Churchill devoted much of his energy to trying to persuade President Roosevelt to support him in the war. He wrote the President copious letters and established a strong personal relationship with him. And he managed to get American help in the Atlantic, where until 1943 Britain's lifeline to the New World was always under severe threat from German U-Boats.

Despite Churchill's championship of Edward VIII, and despite his habit of arriving late for meetings with the neurotically punctual King at Buckingham Palace, he achieved good relations with George VI and his family. Clementine once said that Winston was the last surviving believer in the divine right of kings.

As Churchill tried to forge an alliance with the United States, Hitler made him the gift of another powerful ally – the Soviet Union. Despite his intense hatred of the Communists, Churchill had no hesitation in sending aid to Russia and defending Stalin in public. "If Hitler invaded Hell," he once remarked, "I would at least make a favourable reference to the Devil in the House of Commons."

In December 1941, six months after Hitler had invaded Russia, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. The war had now become a global one. But with the might of America on the Allied side there could be no doubt about its

outcome. Churchill was jubilant, remarking when he heard the news of Pearl Harbor: "So we have won after all!"

However, America's entry into the war also caused Churchill problems; as he said, the only thing worse than fighting a war with allies is fighting a war without them. At first, despite disasters such as the Japanese capture of Singapore early in 1942, Churchill was able to influence the Americans. He persuaded Roosevelt to fight Germany before Japan, and to follow the British strategy of trying to slit open the "soft underbelly" of Europe. This involved the invasions of North Africa, Sicily, and Italy – the last of which proved to have a very well armoured belly.

It soon became apparent that Churchill was the littlest of the "Big Three". At the Teheran Conference in November, 1943, he said, the "poor little English donkey" was squeezed between the great Russian bear and the mighty American buffalo, yet only he knew the way home.

In June 1944 the Allies invaded Normandy and the Americans were clearly in command. General Eisenhower pushed across Northern Europe on a broad front. Germany was crushed between this advance and the Russian steamroller. On May 8, 1945 Britain accepted Germany's surrender and celebrated Victory in Europe Day. Churchill told a huge crowd in Whitehall: "This is your victory." The people shouted: "No, it is yours", and Churchill conducted them in the singing of Land of Hope and Glory. That evening he broadcast to the nation urging the defeat of Japan and paying fulsome homage to the Crown.

From all over the world Churchill received telegrams of congratulations, and he himself was generous with plaudits, writing warmly to General de Gaulle whom he regarded as an awkward ally but a bastion against French Communism. But although victory was widely celebrated throughout Britain, the war in the Far East had a further three months to run. The atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki finally brought the global conflict to a conclusion. But at the pinnacle of military victory, Churchill tasted the bitterness of political defeat.

The Elder Statesman

Churchill expected to win the election of 1945. Everything pointed to his victory, from the primitive opinion polls to the cartoons in newspapers and the adulation Churchill received during the campaign, but he did not conduct it well. From the start he accused the Labour leaders – his former colleagues – of putting party before country and he later said that Socialists could not rule without a political police, a Gestapo. As it happened, such gaffes probably made no difference. The political tide was running against the Tories and towards the party which wholeheartedly favoured a welfare state – the reward for war-time sacrifices. But Churchill was shocked by the scale of his defeat. When Clementine, who wanted him to retire from politics, said that it was perhaps a blessing in disguise, Churchill replied that the blessing was certainly very effectively disguised. For a time, he lapsed into depression, which sympathetic letters from friends did little to dispel.



Soon, however, Churchill re-entered the political arena, taking an active part in political life from the opposition benches and broadcasting again to the nation after the victory over

Japan. In defeat Churchill had always been defiant, but in victory he favoured magnanimity. Within a couple of years he was calling for a partnership between a "spiritually great France and a spiritually great Germany" as the basis for the re-creation of "the European family". He was more equivocal about Britain's role in his proposed "United States of Europe", and, while the embers of the World War II were still warm, he announced the start of the Cold War. At Fulton, Missouri, in 1946, he pointed to the new threat posed by the Soviet Union and declared that an iron curtain had descended across Europe. Only by keeping the alliance between the English-speaking peoples strong, he maintained, could Communist tyranny be resisted.

After losing another election in 1950, Churchill gained victory at the polls the following year. Publicly he called for "several years of quiet steady administration". Privately he declared that his policy was "houses, red meat and not getting scuppered". This he achieved. But after suffering a stroke and the failure of his last hope of arranging a Summit with the Russians, he resigned from the premiership in April 1955.

"I am ready to meet my Maker," Churchill had said on his seventy-fifth birthday; "whether my Maker is prepared for the great ordeal of meeting me is another matter". Churchill remained a member of parliament, though an inactive one, and announced his retirement from politics in 1963. This took effect at the general election the following year. Churchill died on 24 January 1965 – seventy years to the day after the death of his father. He received the greatest state funeral given to a commoner since that of the Duke of Wellington. He was buried in Bladon churchyard beside his parents and within sight of his birthplace, Blenheim Palace.

The Family Man

In the autumn of 1908 Churchill, then a rising Liberal politician, married Clementine Hozier, granddaughter of the 10th Earl of Airlie. Their marriage was to prove a long and happy one, though there were often quarrels – Clementine once threw a dish of spinach at Winston (it missed). Clementine was high principled and highly strung; Winston was stubborn and ambitious. His work invariably came first, though, partly as a reaction against his own upbringing, he was devoted to his children.

Winston and Clementine's first child, Diana, was born in 1909. Diana was a naughty little girl and continued to cause her parents great distress as an adult. In 1932 she married John Bailey, but the marriage was unsuccessful and they divorced in 1935. In that year she married the Conservative politician, Duncan Sandys, and they had three children. That marriage also proved a failure. Diana had several nervous breakdowns and in 1963 she committed suicide.

The Churchills' second child and only son, Randolph, was born in 1911. He was exceptionally handsome and rumbustious, and his father was very

ambitious for him. During the 1930s Randolph stood for parliament several times but he failed to get in, being regarded as a political maverick. He did serve as Conservative Member of Parliament for Preston between 1940 and 1945, and ultimately became an extremely successful journalist and began the official biography of his father during the 1960s.

Randolph was married twice, first in 1939 to Pamela Digby (later Harriman) by whom he had a son, Winston, and secondly in 1948 to June Osborne by whom he had a daughter, Arabella. Neither marriage was a success.

The life of Sarah, the Churchills' third child, born in 1914, was no happier than that of her elder siblings. Amateur dramatics at Chartwell led her to take up a career on the stage which flourished for a time. Sarah's charm and vitality were also apparent in her private life, but her first two marriages proved unsuccessful and she was widowed soon after her third. Her first husband was a music hall artist called Vic Oliver whom she married against her parents' wishes. Her second was Anthony Beauchamp but this marriage did not last and after their separation he committed suicide.

In 1918 Clementine Churchill gave birth to a third girl, Marigold. But in 1921, shortly after the deaths of both Clementine's brother and Winston's mother, Marigold contracted septicaemia whilst on a seaside holiday with the childrens' governess. When she died Winston was grief-stricken and, as his last private secretary recently disclosed in an autobiography, Clementine screamed like an animal undergoing torture.

The following September the Churchills' fifth and last child, Mary, was born. Unlike her brother and older sisters, Mary was to cause her parents no major worries. Indeed she was a constant source of support, especially to her mother. In 1947 she married Christopher Soames; who was then Assistant Military Attaché in Paris and later had a successful parliamentary and diplomatic career. Theirs was to be a long and happy marriage. Over the years Christopher became a valued confidant and counsellor to his father-in-law. They had five children, the eldest of whom (Nicholas)

became a prominent member of the Conservative party. Christopher Soames died in 1987.

The Private Man

Churchill's enormous reserves of energy and his legendary ability to exist on very little sleep gave him time to pursue a wide variety of interests outside the world of politics.

Churchill loved gambling and lost what was, for him, a small fortune in the great crash of the American stock market in October 1929, causing a severe setback to the family finances. But he continued to write as a means of maintaining the style of life to which he had always been accustomed. Apart from his major works, notably his multi-volume histories of the First and Second World Wars and the Life of his illustrious ancestor John, first Duke of Marlborough, he poured forth speeches and articles for newspapers and magazines. His last big book was the History of the English-Speaking Peoples, which he had begun in 1938 and which was eventually published in the 1950s. In 1953 Churchill was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Churchill took up painting as an antidote to the anguish he felt over the Dardanelles disaster. Painting became a constant solace and preoccupation and he rarely spent a few days away from home without taking his canvas and brushes. Even during his tour of France's Maginot Line in the middle of August 1939 Churchill managed to snatch a painting holiday with friends near Dreux.

In the summer of 1922, while on the lookout for a suitable country house, Churchill caught sight of a property near Westerham in Kent, and fell instantly in love with it. Despite Clementine's initial lack of enthusiasm for the dilapidated and neglected house, with its overgrown and seemingly unmanageable grounds, Chartwell was to become a much-loved family home. Clementine, however, never quite overcame her resentment of the fact that Winston had been less than frank with her over the buying of Chartwell, and from time to time her feelings surfaced.

With typical enthusiasm, Churchill personally undertook many major works of construction at Chartwell such as a dam, a swimming pool, the building (largely with his own hands) of a red brick wall to surround the vegetable garden, and the re-tiling of a cottage at the bottom of the garden. In 1946 Churchill bought a farm adjoining Chartwell and subsequently derived much pleasure, though little profit, from farming.

Churchill was born into the world of hunting, shooting and fishing and throughout his life they were to prove spasmodic distractions. But it was hunting and polo, first learned as a young cavalry officer in India, that he enjoyed most of all.

In the summer of 1949, Churchill embarked on a new venture – he bought a racehorse. On the advice of Christopher Soames, he purchased a grey three-year-old colt, Colonist II. It was to be the first of several thoroughbreds in his small stud. They were registered in Lord Randolph's colours – pink with chocolate sleeves and cap. (These have been adopted as the colours of Churchill College.) Churchill was made a member of the Jockey Club in 1950, and greatly relished the distinction.

Among Winston's closest friends were Professor Lindemann and the "the three B's" (none popular with Clementine), Birkenhead, Beaverbrook, Bracken. The Churchills entertained widely, including among their guests Charlie Chaplin, Albert Einstein and Lawrence of Arabia. Churchill regularly holidayed with rich friends in the Mediterranean, spending several cruises in the late 1950s as the guest of Greek millionaire shipowner, Aristotle Onassis.

<https://winstonchurchill.org/the-life-of-churchill/life/>

Timeline of a Lifetime

Childhood, Overview

1874 - 1892



*Lord Randolph Churchill married Jennie Jerome on April 15, 1874
at the British Embassy in Paris*

Lord Randolph and Jennie Jerome Marry

Lord Randolph Churchill and Miss Jennie Jerome met during the racing season in 1873 on the Isle of Wight—one of the significant social events of the British summer season. Lord Randolph fell in love with her at first sight, and in a few months, they were man and wife.’ They had a relatively short courtship and decided to marry when she accepted his proposal not long after having met. They married on the 15th of April 1874.

Winston Churchill was born on 30 November 1874

Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill was born at Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire on St Andrew’s Day, 30 November 1874.

Mrs Everest Hired

Churchill's beloved nanny Mrs Everest was hired to attend young Winston when he was just a few months old. In 1880, when Winston was five, his younger brother Jack was born. They saw little of their parents during their childhood, and both were devoted to their nanny.



Young Winston Churchill

Young Winston is enrolled in St George's School

A few weeks before his eighth birthday, in 1882, Churchill was sent away to boarding school like many other children of his class and background. The school was St George's, near Ascot, Berkshire. He was unhappy from the start, initially probably no unhappier than many children sent away to school at the time, although 'floggings' (beatings) were common.

Churchill began at Harrow School in April 1888

On 17 April 1888, Churchill went to Harrow School, an independent boarding school for boys founded in 1572 under a Royal Charter granted by Elizabeth I, in London. He joined Head Master's Boarding House, said to date from 1650. Here, he wasn't particularly happy and he didn't particularly excel.



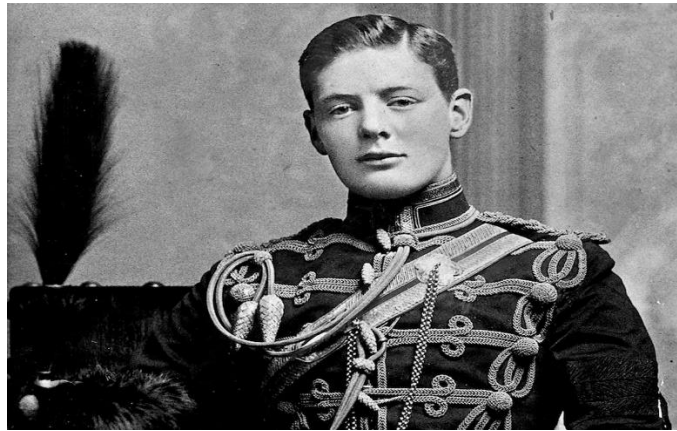
Winston Churchill at Harrow School, 1892

Churchill proclaims he will '... save the Empire'

At the age of seventeen, while attending Harrow School, he told his friend Murland Evans that he had dreams about the future: 'I tell you I shall be in command of the defences of London... In the high position I shall occupy, it will fall to me to save the Capital and save the Empire'.

Young Soldier

1893 - 1900



Young Winston Churchill in the uniform of the Queen's Own 4th Hussars

WSC passes out of Sandhurst in December 1894

The death of Lord Randolph Churchill on 24 January 1895, aged just forty-five, and before Churchill had been able to prove himself to his father, clearly had a profound effect. Churchill became a cavalry officer in the 4th Queen's Own Hussars only a month later but almost from the beginning his mind was set on following his father into politics. To do this he needed fame and fortune.

First visit to US, introduced to Bourke Cockran and observes fighting in Cuba

In November 1895, Churchill was able to get himself posted to Cuba as an observer. Churchill had a period of leave and managed to obtain his first assignment as a war correspondent for the newspaper. It was also in Cuba that he first refined his well-known taste for fine Cuban cigars. He was attached to the Spanish forces as an observer but his writings reveal considerable sympathies for the Cuban rebels.



Second-Lieutenant Winston Churchill in the 4th Queen's Own Hussars in India, 1896

Publishes 1st book, The Story of the Malakand Field Force

Winston Churchill published his first of many books on 14 March 1898, 'The Story of the Malakand Field Force: An Episode of Frontier War. The book describes his time on the North West Frontier as part of a military campaign by the British army in what is now western Pakistan and eastern Afghanistan.

Escaped a Boer POW Camp in South Africa

Churchill, at age 25, was able to use his fame as a writer to get himself posted to South Africa as a war correspondent. In November, he went on patrol with the British Army aboard a train, and they were ambushed. The Boer's took him prisoner, and on the night of 12/13 December, he jumped the fence as the guards had turned their backs.



Winston Churchill as a young politician

Elected Conservative Member for Oldham

Churchill's was first elected to the constituency of Oldham on Monday, 1 October 1900 (for which he sat in 1900-06). The electorate favoured the Conservative policy of Protectionism, which advocated duties on cheap foreign textiles. In a parliamentary career spanning sixty-four years, Churchill represented five constituencies and served under thirteen Prime Ministers.

Begins first lecture tour of North America

Churchill went on his first lecture tour of North America, from 8 December 1900 through 2 February 1901. On 10 December, he met then US President Theodore 'Teddy' Roosevelt.

Rising Politician

1901 - 1932

Gives his Maiden Speech in the House

On Sunday, 10 February 1901, Winston Churchill returned from a lecture tour of Britain, the United States and Canada. His heroic escape from the Boer POW camp in South Africa in 1899 had propelled him to worldwide fame. Upon his return to London, he gave his maiden speech in the House of Commons.



Winston Churchill as a young politician, 30 May 1899

Named Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies

In December 1905, Henry Campbell-Bannerman took office as Prime Minister when the Liberals were invited to form a government. Churchill became Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies. Lord Elgin held the post of Colonial Secretary with responsibility for directing all colonial affairs worldwide.

Winston and Clementine Marry

Churchill could be very charming, but he also was known to be quite difficult at times. He had such a presence and reputation that there were very few men who would stand up to him. There was, however, one very strong-willed woman who always would – his wife.

Appointed First Lord of the Admiralty

The ministerial post of First Lord of the Admiralty is the civilian head of the British Royal Navy. Churchill was appointed to the coveted post on Wednesday, 25 October 1911, and, like most things he did, he took it up with great gusto. Churchill adored

Navy life aboard the Admiralty yacht Enchantress. After taking up office, he set out to visit every capital ship and every Royal Navy base in the British Isles.



1912 Winston Churchill, 1st Lord of the Admiralty on board the 'Enchantress', cruising in the Mediterranean,

Franco-British naval attack on Dardanelles fails

Winston had a great many setbacks in his lifetime. The failure of the attack on the Dardanelles during the Gallipoli Campaign, however, was one of the most devastating. Though the Dardanelles Commission later exonerated him of most of the blame for the military failure, he was the most vocal champion of the strategic move to cut off the Turkish support of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War.



Churchill's painting of the black swans of Chartwell

Begins Oil Painting at Hoe Farm, Surrey

In May 1915, after the disastrous Gallipoli campaign, Churchill was forced to resign his office of First Lord of the Admiralty. This event was a devastating blow to him, both personally and politically. During this period, Churchill found himself in a great depression. He decided to take up painting as a hobby to help with his depression. Today, this is what's known as 'art therapy'.

David Lloyd George becomes Prime Minister

Churchill crossed the floor to switch parties (for the first time) from the Tory to the Liberal Party in 1904. He'd decided to ally himself with David Lloyd George, who encouraged him to make the switch. Lloyd George became Prime Minister of a wartime coalition in 1916 and was instrumental in helping Churchill rehabilitate his political image after the disaster of the Gallipoli campaign.



David Lloyd George and Winston Churchill in 1910

Appointed Minister of Munitions

Churchill's old friend, mentor, and sometime rival, David Lloyd George, became Prime Minister in December 1916. Believing that the anti-Churchill sentiment after the Dardanelles disaster could be overcome, Lloyd George controversially brought Churchill back into government as Minister of Munitions.

Winston Churchill Meets Franklin Roosevelt

In July 1918, in his capacity as Assistant Secretary of the US Navy, Franklin Roosevelt visited Great Britain. He was greeted in Portsmouth and then driven by car to London, where he was billeted at the Ritz Hotel in Piccadilly. Roosevelt attended a dinner at Gray's Inn in London, where he first met Winston Churchill. He was thoroughly unimpressed.



Winston Churchill and Sir William Robert Robertson in August 1919.

Successfully Offers to Buy Chartwell

In 1922, Churchill purchased what was to become his respite from the world, Chartwell, his beloved country home in the Kent countryside. Just an hour from London, he said of it once that, 'A day away from Chartwell is a day wasted'. He spent £5,000 to purchase Chartwell and a further £15,000 in refurbishment costs.



Winston and Clementine's country home Chartwell in Kent

Appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer

Churchill stood for election in 1924 as a 'Constitutionalist' rather than Liberal or Unionist and won a seat representing the constituency of Epping. He then accepted appointment in Stanley Baldwin's Unionist government as Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Officially rejoins Conservative Party

Churchill left the conservatives in 1904 for the Liberal Party after having been a Member of Parliament for four years. In 1925, after more than twenty years with the Liberals, he formally rejoined the Conservative Party, apparently noting later that '... anyone can rat, but it takes a certain amount of ingenuity to re-rat'.

Wilderness Years

1933 - 1939



Winston Churchill with his trademark cigar in the 1930s

Adolf Hitler elected German Chancellor

Adolf Hitler was appointed German Chancellor on Friday, 30 January 1933, by President Paul von Hindenburg. The National Socialist German Workers Party (or Nazi Party) has seen a meteoric rise in popularity in several previous elections, principally due to the economic and political failure of the Weimar Republic.

First speech on the need to rebuild Britain's air defences

In November 1932, Churchill visited Munich and saw for himself the brown-shirted Nazis marching through the streets. Churchill began to speak out in the House and write articles in the press about the potential dangers of a rearmed Germany and the vital need to rebuild Britain's air defences. 'The House was enraged in an ugly mood towards Mr Churchill', declared the Daily Despatch. He was called a warmonger for speaking out. This anti-Churchill sentiment continued through the 1930s.

Churchill joins Committee of Imperial Defence

During his 'wilderness years' of the 1930s, Churchill had many detractors on both sides of the House. Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin invited Churchill to join the Committee for Imperial Defence. He and Churchill exchanged several letters setting the terms such that Churchill would be free to argue his position on the state of Britain's air defences.



Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty, at a meeting of the Admiralty, 1939.

Appointed First Lord of the Admiralty

The period of Churchill's exile, during the 'wilderness years' ended when it became clear that he was correct about German rearmament and Hitler's plans for expansion. The Germans invaded Poland in September 1939. On the day that the British declared war, Churchill was brought back into government. This would be the second time of his appointment to the office of First Lord of the Admiralty.

War Leader

1940 - 1945



Winston Churchill giving a speech during the Second World War

Churchill becomes Prime Minister and Minister of Defence

Though his reputation was still not yet fully rehabilitated, a confluence of events led King George VI to invite Churchill to form a government in May 1940. On 13 May, Churchill gave the first of many of his great wartime speeches. He told the House of Commons, 'I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat'.

Convinces Cabinet to fight on, Belgium surrenders

The situation was dire. British and French forces were pinned down on the coast of France as the evacuation of more than 300,000 troops to Britain was underway. Foreign Minister Lord Halifax and others wanted to negotiate with Herr Hitler, but Churchill was defiant, saying, 'Nations that went down fighting rose again, but those which surrendered tamely were finished'.

Gives his 'Finest Hour' speech

Churchill gave many speeches for which he became famous, but his 'Finest Hour' speech stands alone. Churchill concluded his speech with his now celebrated final point, 'Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duty and so bear ourselves that if the British Empire and its Commonwealth lasts for a thousand years men will still say, "This was their finest hour"'.

Visits Normandy beachheads

On D-Day+6, Churchill sailed across the Channel to the coast of France aboard the HMS Kelvin and visited the beaches at Normandy, surveying the destruction. General Sir Bernard Montgomery met him, and they later lunched together at Montgomery's headquarters just three miles from the front.



The 'Big Three' at the Tehran Conference, 1943. Marshal Josef Stalin, President Franklin D Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill

Makes 'percentages' agreement on spheres of influence

Churchill took many controversial actions during his lifetime, but this was one to top the list. Meeting with Russian ally Joseph Stalin at a conference in Moscow, and purposely excluding Roosevelt's representative from the discussion, they agreed to carve up Eastern Europe by percentages of influence.

Resigns as Prime Minister

The war in Europe ended with Victory in Europe (VE) Day on 8 May 1945, and the western world erupted in jubilation. The British public was elated but very weary of war. Churchill easily won his seat in Parliament for Woodford, but the Conservatives were thrown out of office. He would resign the office of Prime Minister to make way for Clement Attlee and the Labour Party.

Senior Statesman

1946 - 1965

'Iron Curtain' speech at Fulton, Missouri

One of the most important speeches Churchill would give in his career was his 'Sinews of Peace', otherwise known as his 'Iron Curtain' speech. As in the past, Churchill was prescient at this time in describing the aggressive ambitions of the Soviet Union. Given at Westminster College in Missouri just a year after the end of the Second World War, this speech would set the stage for the next forty five years of the 'Cold War'.

Publishes The Gathering Storm

Though Winston Churchill was an aristocrat and a grandson of the Duke of Marlborough, he was constantly short of funds. This was until he published his war memoirs, beginning with *The Gathering Storm*, which was the first of his six-volume work, *The Second World War*. Finally, with the advance from the publishing house Cassell, he and his family would be on sound financial ground.

Winston Churchill

IN MEMORIAM

Sir Martin Gilbert, in the final volume of his epic biography *Winston S Churchill*, said, 'Men and women wept when they heard the news of Churchill's death. Nearly ten years had passed since his last months as Prime Minister, a quarter of a century since his "finest hour" in 1940. He had died seventy years to the day after his father, Lord Randolph Churchill, the man whose respect and approval he would have so liked to have won, but who had not lived long enough to see even the earliest phases of his son's remarkable career.'

1965

The Long Sunset

1959, Churchill visited Morocco – and Marrakech (where he'd painted some of his most acclaimed pictures) – and painted from his balcony at La Mamounia for the final time. And when he next visited La Pausa, later in 1959, he found himself no longer able to wield his paintbrush.



Winston Churchill's funeral procession, 30 January 1965

Sir Winston's Funeral on 30th January, 1965

"This wasn't a funeral, it was a triumph." – Lady Clementine Churchill,
30 January 1965.



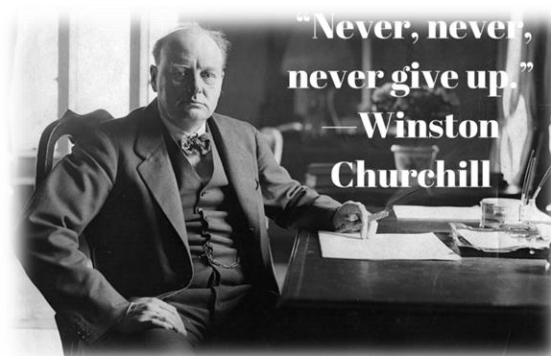
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Winston Churchill

IN MEMORANDUM

Churchill became Prime Minister of a national government on 10 May 1940, the very day that Hitler invaded France and the Low Countries. The first few weeks of his premiership were marked by military disaster, as France surrendered and the British army was evacuated from Dunkirk. The United Kingdom then faced direct attack in the Battle of Britain and the Blitz.

Churchill's famous speeches and broadcasts were carefully constructed to raise British morale while sending a message of defiance to Germany and a call for support to the United States. Churchill's policy was 'victory at all costs' through 'blood, toil, tears and sweat'. Though sixty-five in 1940, he strove to take the offensive to the enemy and worked tirelessly to assemble and maintain the Grand Alliance against fascism. With his bulldog scowl, ever-present cigar and V for Victory salute he came to personify the British war effort.



Churchill, the Greatest Briton, Hated Gandhi, the Greatest Indian

Exactly a century ago, Mahatma Gandhi began his first all-India movement against British colonial rule. Winston Churchill was, and continued to be, unimpressed by those efforts.

By Ramachandra Guha

<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2019/04/churchill-gandhi-briton-indian-greatest/584170/>

Within his homeland, Winston Churchill's colossal contribution to saving his people from Hitler eclipses all else, and he is widely regarded as the greatest Briton of all time. So it came as something of a surprise when a senior Labour Party politician recently described him as a "villain" for having ordered troops to fire on striking workers in the Welsh town of Tonypandy in 1910. The claim provoked vigorous denunciations from prominent politicians, as well as more sober reflections in op-ed pages. When the dust settles, as it soon must, Churchill will revert to being the figure of sanctity that he has always been.

Within his homeland, that is. Outside the United Kingdom, Churchill has always had a decidedly mixed reputation. This is especially so in India, my own country, where his undying opposition to freedom for Indians is both well-known and widely deplored. As is his hatred for Mahatma Gandhi, a figure he repeatedly mocked, calling him (among other things) a "malignant subversive fanatic" and "a seditious Middle Temple lawyer, now posing as a fakir of a type well known in the East, striding half-naked up the steps of the Viceregal palace."

Churchill and Gandhi met once, in November 1906. The Englishman was then the undersecretary of state for the colonies; the Indian, a spokesman for the rights of his countrymen in South Africa. Back then, Gandhi wore a suit and tie, as befitting a lawyer trained in London. It is not clear whether Churchill remembered their meeting when, in the

early 1930s, he began attacking Gandhi, whose Salt March had made waves around the world and established him as the preeminent leader of India's struggle for freedom from British rule.

At the time, Churchill was out of office and seeking to rebuild his political career by working up British sentiment in defence of the empire. By the time he was prime minister a decade later, leading the fight against the Nazis, he remained implacably opposed to independence for Gandhi's people. His senior cabinet colleague Leo Amery recalled how Churchill had once referred to Indians "as a beastly people with a beastly religion." He might have added that their leader was, in his opinion, the beastliest of them all.

In August 1942, Gandhi launched his last great popular struggle, the Quit India Movement. He was immediately arrested and taken to a prison in Poona (now known as Pune). Churchill also convinced himself that Gandhi was acting on behalf of the Axis powers. Archived British documents show that in September 1942, Churchill wrote to Amery, "Please let me have a note on Mr. Gandhi's intrigues with Japan and the documents the Government of India published, or any other they possessed before on this topic." Three days later, Amery replied, "The India Office has no evidence to show, or suggest, that Gandhi has intrigued with Japan." The "only evidence of Japanese contacts [with Gandhi] during the war," Amery continued, "relates to the presence in Wardha of two Japanese Buddhist priests who lived for part of 1940 in Gandhi's Ashram."

The Quit India Movement was marked by protests across the country. A British government report blamed Gandhi for the violence that followed his arrest. Gandhi was hurt by the accusations, since he had always preached and practiced nonviolence. When the Raj refused to retract the accusations, Gandhi began a three-week fast in prison. Once again, Churchill developed unfounded suspicions about Gandhi, this time convincing himself that the Indian was secretly using energy supplements, and therefore not really fasting.

On February 13, 1943, Churchill wired the viceroy, Lord Linlithgow: "I have heard that Gandhi usually has glucose in his water when doing his various fasting antics. Would it be possible to verify this." Two days later the Viceroy responded, "This may be the case but those who have been in attendance on him doubt it, and present Surgeon-General Bombay (a European) says that on a previous fast G. was particularly careful to guard against possibility of glucose being used. I am told that his present medical attendants tried to persuade him to take glucose yesterday and again today, and that he refused absolutely."

As Gandhi's fast entered its third week, Churchill again wired the viceroy:

Cannot help feeling very suspicious of *bona fides* of Gandhi's fast. We were told fourth day would be the crisis and then well staged climax was set for eleventh day onwards. Now at fifteenth day bulletins look as if he might get through. Would be most valuable [if] fraud could be exposed. Surely with all those Congress Hindu doctors round him it is quite easy to slip glucose or other nourishment into his food.

By this time, the viceroy was himself exasperated with Gandhi. But no evidence showed that he had actually taken any glucose. So the viceroy now replied to Churchill in a manner that stoked both men's prejudices. "I have long known Gandhi as the world's most successful humbug," Linlithgow fumed, "and have not the least doubt that his physical condition and the bulletins reporting it from day to day have been deliberately cooked so as to produce the maximum effect on public opinion." Then, going against his own previous statement, the viceroy claimed that "there would be no difficulty in his entourage administering glucose or any other food without the knowledge of the Government doctors"—this when the same government doctors had told him exactly the opposite. "If I can discover any firm of evidence of fraud I will let you hear," Linlithgow wrote to Churchill, adding, "but I am not hopeful of this."

This prompted an equally disappointed reply from Churchill: "It now seems certain that the old rascal will emerge all the better from his so-called fast."

In 1943, Lord Wavell replaced Linlithgow as viceroy. The prime minister warned Wavell "that only over his [Churchill's] dead body would any approach to Gandhi take place." Then he joked that Wavell had "one great advantage over the last few Viceroy's": They "had to decide whether and when to lock up Gandhi," whereas this viceroy "should find him already locked up."

Wavell, however, stood against Linlithgow and Churchill and believed that India should become independent. He released Gandhi from prison in May 1944. When World War II ended a year later and a Labour government came to power in Britain, Churchill's reactionary policies were set aside, and formal negotiations for a transfer of power began. The British departed the subcontinent in August 1947, dividing it as they left into the separate, sovereign nations of India and Pakistan. Gandhi was murdered by a Hindu fanatic in January 1948.

These facts are well known. What is not is that Churchill's dislike of Gandhi persisted even after British rule in India had ended and his adversary had died.

In 1951, Churchill published an installment of his war memoirs, *The Hinge of Fate*, and made an astonishing charge against Gandhi. The former prime minister claimed that the Indian had conducted his 1943 fast "under the most favourable conditions in a small palace" and that "the most active world-wide propaganda was set on foot that his death was approaching." Then Churchill wrote, "It was certain, however, at an early stage that he was being fed with glucose whenever he drank water, and this, as well as his own intense vitality and lifelong austerity, enabled this frail being to maintain his prolonged abstention from any visible form of food."

"In the end," Churchill continued, "being quite convinced of our obduracy he abandoned his fast, and his health, though he was very weak, was not seriously affected."

The publication of this volume of *The Hinge of Fate* created an uproar in India. Gandhi's secretary, Pyarelal, and his doctor, B. C. Roy, wrote angry letters to Churchill, dismissing the Englishman's claims as canards. Gandhi had refused to take glucose at any time during his fast—which Linlithgow had written to Churchill—even though a government doctor had warned him that he might die if he did not. Further, Gandhi had always said that his fast would last exactly three weeks.

The Indian press also responded with fury, archival materials show. *The Tribune*, a newspaper based in the northern-Indian city of Ambala, said Churchill's charges had been refuted by those who had firsthand knowledge of Gandhi's fast, and put Churchill's baseless attacks in a broader context. "Mr. Churchill's remarks only betray his lack of understanding of the Mahatma's character and his general ignorance about this country," the paper wrote. "Mr. Churchill is a great war-time leader. But no man is more insular in his outlook. He has yet to realise that the people of Asia, Africa and the Middle East are entitled to a life of their own. He still thinks in terms of the hegemony of the world by Anglo-Saxon peoples."

Even sharper in its criticism was the now-defunct *Indian News Chronicle*. Its editorial on September 27, 1951, titled "Churchilliana," said the former British leader's memoirs were full of myths and misstatements, of which the calumnies against Gandhi were

representative. Churchill's "entire political career," the paper thundered, "is a record of political opportunism, inconsistency, and downright wickedness." Calling him a "friend of reaction" and "a high priest of British imperialism," the editorial ended:

Mr. Churchill is incorrigible, hopelessly out of date, and is getting unpopular day by day. His memoirs might be read for their grandiloquent phraseology, bombast, and nineteenth century English, but no student of history will find his version of recent history a safe guide. The odds are that these memoirs, in course of time, will be rescinded to the dustbin. And as for his malicious attacks on Mahatma Gandhi, we are certain that they will deceive no one. Long after Churchill and his memoirs have been forgotten, humanity will continue to regard Gandhiji as a beacon of peace; and cherish his memory with reverence even as they cherish the memory of Jesus, Buddha and Socrates.

The *Hindustan Times'* response was less polemical, but arguably more effective. The paper was then edited by Gandhi's son Devdas, who dispatched a reporter to locate Major General R. H. Candy, the British doctor who had attended to Gandhi during his prison fast. Asked to comment on Churchill's allegations, Candy, then living in retirement in rural Hampshire, confirmed that he had indeed advised Gandhi to take glucose, but that Gandhi had refused. "From my knowledge of Mr. Gandhi," he said, "I am convinced that he would not willingly have taken glucose or any other form of food" during his fast. Churchill's response to these corrections is unknown.

Recent works by Indians have blamed Churchill for the Great Bengal Famine of 1943, in which more than 2 million people died. As prime minister, Churchill could have done more to ensure speedy supplies of grain to the affected areas. But to call him a war criminal and a mass murderer, as some polemicists have done, is surely hyperbolic.

That said, there is no question that Churchill had an intense dislike of Indians in general, and a pathological suspicion of one Indian in particular. His venomous and long-lasting hatred of Gandhi shows that this great Briton could sometimes think and act like a small-minded parochialist.

*This essay has been adapted from Ramachandra Guha's book
Gandhi: The Years That Changed the World, 1914–1948*

Gandhi leaves a meeting in London in 1931.



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